(c) No, Sir. There is no such direction in the judgment of the Supreme Court.

Removal of LPG from VAT

2892. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India LPG Distributors Federation has threatened that if LPG was not spared from the imposition of VAT, they would stop supply of LPG throughout the country with effect from the 15th of April, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto and the steps taken by his Ministry to take up the matter with the Ministry of Finance?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The issue of removal of VAT on LPG was raised by All India LPG Distributors Federation (AILDF) with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG). AILDF have been advised to take up the matter directly with the Empowered Committee of the State Finance Ministers/Ministry of Finance.

Production of petrol from vegetations

2893. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the fact that a kind of vegetation is grown in the State of Uttaranchal which can be used in producing petrol and petroleum products;

(b) if so, whether a proposal for introduction of a plan in co-operation with State Government for encouraging the commercial production of such vegetation with financial help from ONGC will be considered by him; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Petroleum products, including petrol, and diesel,

are produced from crude oil, which is a fossil fuel. However, certain fuels can be produced from agricultural products, such as ethanol, which can be produced from molasses, a by-product of sugar, or bio-diesel which can be produced from vegetable oils and fats. In many parts of the country, including in the State of Uttaranchal, State Governments are promoting the cultivation of non-edible oil seeds plants such as Jatropha Curcus, from the oil of which bio-diesel can be produced.

(b) and (c) ONGC is in the business of exploration for and production of crude Oil and Natural Gas Marketing of petroleum and petroleum and petroleum products, including alternative fuel based on agricultural produce comes under the purview of the Oil Marketing Companies. As part of their R&D activities, the R&D units of Oil Companies, particularly M/s. Indian Oil Corporation Limited, have manufactured bio-diesel for experimental purposes, mainly to study blending of bio-diesel in diesel and its effect on performance in the transportation sector. Oil Companies are not themselves involved in, nor do they promote, the cultivation of agricultural products from which bio-diesel is derived. That is the responsibility of the National Mission on Bio-diesel.

ONGC's projects in Sudan

2894. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC is laying a 741-Km long petroleum product pipeline in Sudan and will also build a 1.2 billion dollar oil refinery in Sudan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of Indian professionals who will get an opportunity?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In view of the satisfactory performance of ONGC/OVL in Sudan in the Greater Nile Oil Project (GNOP) and the 5A & 5B Blocks, where OVL have a participating interest, and keeping in view the excellent relationship between the two countries, the Sudan Government offered the Khartoum-Port Sudan Pipeline Project and Port Sudan Refinery Project to ONGC/OVL in October, 2003.